Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1.   (Currently Amended) An electronic musical instrument for playing back an audio phrase, comprising:

tempo setting means for setting a playback tempo of the audio phrase;

first readout position means for generating first audio phrase readout positions in conformance with a playback tempo set by the tempo setting means;

a readout position change operator that is operable by a performer to indicate a desired amount of readout position change;

second readout position means for generating second audio phrase readout positions during and in conformance with operation of the operator by the performer; and

signal processing means for playing back said audio phrase in accordance with said second audio phrase readout positions ~~when~~ during the performer's operation of the operator ~~is being operated~~, and for playing back said audio phrase in accordance with said first audio phrase readout positions after the duration of operation of the operator, when the operator is not being operated.

2.   (Currently Amended) The electronic musical instrument claimed in claim 1, wherein the operator comprises a pressure sensitive surface and is operated by applying pressure to a location on the ~~flat structure~~ surface and moving the location.

3.   (Original) The electronic musical instrument claimed in claim 1, wherein the operator comprises switching means for indicating termination of operation of the operator.

4.   (Original) The electronic musical instrument claimed in claim 1, wherein the audio phrase is stored as waveform data.

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5.   (Currently Amended) An electronic musical instrument, comprising:

a waveform memory storing audio waveform data;

a tempo setting operator for receiving user input specifying a playback tempo for the waveform data;

a readout position change operator that is operable by a user to indicate, during operation of the readout position change operator, a desired amount of waveform data readout position change; and

a computer readable medium storing programming instructions for causing the instrument to perform processing comprising:

generating first waveform data readout positions in accordance with a playback tempo set by the tempo setting operator;

when the readout position change operator is being operated, generating second waveform data readout positions during and in accordance with operation of the readout position change operator and playing back said audio phrase in accordance with said second waveform data readout positions; and

after the duration of operation of the readout position change operator, when the readout position change operator is not being operated, playing back said audio phrase in accordance with said first waveform data readout positions.

6.   (Original) The instrument claimed in claim 5, wherein, upon termination of operation of the readout position change operator, playback of the waveform data returns to synchronization with the specified playback tempo at a readout position that would be the current readout position had the readout position change operator not been operated.

7.   (Original) The instrument claimed in claim 5, wherein the readout position change operator comprises a pressure sensitive surface, wherein operation of the readout position change operator is indicated by the application of at least a predetermined amount of pressure to the surface, and wherein an amount of readout position change is indicated by an amount of angular movement of a location of said pressure on the surface with respect to a reference point.

8.   (Original) The instrument claimed in claim 7, wherein angular movement in a first direction indicates forward movement of the second readout positions with respect to the first readout positions, and angular movement in a second direction indicates backward movement of the second readout positions with respect to the first readout positions.

9.   (Original) The instrument claimed in claim 7, wherein angular movement by a predetermined amount indicates a readout position change corresponding to a predetermined unit of musical time of the waveform data.

10.   (Original) The instrument claimed in claim 5, wherein the readout position change operator comprises a bender lever, wherein an amount of readout position change is indicated by an amount of movement of the lever in either a first direction or a second direction opposite said first direction.

11.   (Original) The instrument claimed in claim 10, wherein movement of the lever in the first direction indicates forward movement of the second readout positions with respect to the first readout positions, and movement of the lever in the second direction indicates backward movement of the second readout positions with respect to the first readout positions.

12.   (Original) The instrument claimed in claim 10, wherein termination of use of the bender lever is indicated by movement of the lever in a third direction different from the first and second directions.

13.   (Currently Amended) A method for producing an audio signal from audio waveform data, comprising:

generating first waveform data readout positions for producing said audio signal at a specified playback tempo;

~~upon~~ during detecting operation of a readout position change operator, generating second waveform data readout positions in accordance with operation of the readout position change

operator and producing said audio signal from the audio waveform data in accordance with said second waveform data readout positions; and

after the duration of operation of the readout position change operator, when the readout position change operator is not being operated, producing said audio signal from the audio waveform data using said first waveform data readout positions.

14.   (Original) The method claimed in claim 13, wherein, upon termination of operation of the readout position change operator, playback of the waveform data returns to synchronization with the specified playback tempo at a readout position that would be the current readout position had the readout position change operator not been operated.

15.   (Original) The method claimed in claim 13, wherein the readout position change operator comprises a pressure sensitive surface, wherein operation of the readout position change operator is indicated by the application of at least a predetermined amount of pressure to the surface, and wherein an amount of readout position change is indicated by an amount of angular movement of a location of said pressure on the surface with respect to a reference point.

16.   (Original) The method claimed in claim 15, wherein angular movement in a first direction indicates forward movement of the second readout positions with respect to the first readout positions, and angular movement in a second direction indicates backward movement of the second readout positions with respect to the first readout positions.

17.   (Original) The method claimed in claim 15, wherein angular movement by a predetermined amount indicates a readout position change corresponding to a predetermined unit of musical time of the waveform data.

18.   (Original) The method claimed in claim 13, wherein the readout position change operator comprises a bender lever, wherein an amount of readout position change is indicated by an amount of movement of the lever in either a first direction or a second direction opposite said first direction.

19. (Original) The method claimed in claim 18, wherein movement of the lever in the first direction indicates forward movement of the second readout positions with respect to the first readout positions, and movement of the lever in the second direction indicates backward movement of the second readout positions with respect to the first readout positions.

20. (Original) The method claimed in claim 18, wherein termination of use of the bender lever is indicated by movement of the lever in a third direction different from the first and second directions.